

Washington, D.C. -- Congressman Jeff Fortenberry today commented on a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announcement that China intends to reopen its markets to American pork and live swine.

"This is a very positive and long overdue development for pork producers in Nebraska and across the nation," Fortenberry said. "Our pork industry suffered an unfortunate setback due to the erroneous association of pork consumption with the H1N1 virus. I am pleased that the emerging Chinese market will again be open to American producers."

Fortenberry, a member of the House Agriculture and Foreign Affairs Committees, last month urged U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk to prioritize the reopening of Chinese markets on behalf of Nebraska producers and American agriculture.

In May, China banned all pork imports from the U.S. due to "swine flue" concerns. China had been a growing market for American meat producers, accounting for \$560 million in pork exports in 2008. The nation represents an enormous market opportunity, as China itself accounts for 47 percent of world pork consumption. USDA notes that two-way trade of agricultural, fish, and forest products between the U.S. and China has grown in recent years to over \$21 billion per year.

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